

**Memorandum of the Meeting
Regular Study Session/Meeting
Twenty-Eighth Town Council of Highland
Monday, March 4, 2013**

The regular study session of the Twenty-Eighth Town Council of the Town of Highland was convened at the regular place, the Highland Municipal, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana, in the plenary meeting chambers on **Monday, March 4, 2013** at the time of 7:00 o'clock p.m.

Silent Roll Call: Councilors Bernie Zemen, Dan Vassar, Konnie Kuiper and Brian Novak were present. Councilor Mark Herak joined the meeting at 7:25 p.m. owing to transit delays. A quorum was attained. The Clerk-Treasurer Michael W. Griffin was present to memorialize the proceedings, arriving at 7:09 owing to travel from Muncie where continuing education was conducted.

Others present: Pete Hojnicky, Metropolitan Police Chief; George Georgeff, Metropolitan Police Commander; and Alex M. Brown, CPRP, Parks and Recreation Superintendent were present.

Speros Batistatos, FCDME, President and CEO of the South Shore Convention and Visitors Authority was also present.

General Substance of Matters Discussed

1. Mr. Batistatos, having asked for an opportunity to meet with the Town Council, expressed appreciation for allowing him time to meet with the Town Council.

Mr. Batistatos commended the appointment of Christine Cash as Highland's delegate to the South Shore Board of Directors.

Mr. Batistatos reported the hotel occupancy rate in Lake County was 57%, which he represented as being better than surrounding communities.

Mr. Batistatos discussed with the Town Council, HB 1365, a proposed law requested by the South Shore Visitors and Convention Authority that would end the current revenue sharing of Innkeepers Tax with the several cities and towns in Lake County, amounting for Highland a revenue of \$4,800 annually. Instead, these moneys would be deposited into a sort of "trust fund", and local governments would apply for draws based upon specific events or purposes. The change in the law was being sought, said Mr. Batistatos, owing to a perception by his board that many current recipients may not be using the funds according to the statutory purposes.

2. Daniel Atilano, AIA, Brian T. Meade, and Jake Davis, AIA, all of Dewberry Architects, made a presentation to the Town Council regarding prospective designs for a proposed public safety or town hall reconstruction.

Mr. Davis was introduced as the Practice Segment Leader for Public Safety Architectural Group and he spoke to the firm's experience designing police and public safety facilities, showing in particular recently completed projects in Romeoville, Illinois and Hanover Park, Illinois.

The Dewberry representatives then presented three concepts for design regarding a retrofit of the current town hall and the construction of a new public safety building or wing.

The Dewberry representatives included consideration of stormwater retention development rules, which added to the acreage needed. Mr. Atilano then expressed his

hope to be able to work with Highland again. It was noted that Dewberry performed the architectural design of the Lincoln Community Center.

The Dewberry representatives departed at this time from the plenary meeting hall. The representatives were given a tour of the town hall by Commander Georgeff.

3. The Parks and Recreation Superintendent reported that he was informed by representatives from Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission that federal aid money was available to support enhanced safety hardware for the bike trail intersection at 45th Avenue linking the Highland segment to the Griffith segment of the bicycle paths. Mr. Brown further reported that the repair would consist of a change in the contours of the roadway that would slightly elevate the section of 45th at the Bike trail intersection and also provide for what he described as a "Hawk system", which would be a rider triggered traffic light. The project estimate is \$100,000 and the Federal share would be 90%. The local share would be divided between Griffith and Highland. Mr. Brown wanted to act on the matter but wanted to alert the Town Council to gather any concerns it may have.
4. The Town Council President reported on a recent meeting he convened with County Councilor Eldon Strong, Dan Dernulc, and County Commissioner Repay. They were joined by Fire Chief Timmer and Metropolitan Police Chief Hojnicky. The discussion concerned the status of the so-called state mandated public safety access point (PSAP) (911) Consolidation. It was noted that the plan called for a single center and a back-up center that would be "dark" until activated by need.

The Town Council President discussed the possibility of advocating for Highland to be the host site for the so-called "dark" or back-up site. He further suggested that in light of the pending public safety facility construction, it might be possible to incorporate the added space required into the plans for the new public safety facility.

The other members of the council encouraged pursuing the idea.

5. The Town Council discussed advancing the proposed reconstruction of the public safety facility and the Town Hall. The discussion included consideration of the several possible approaches to the project. The Town Council seemed to favor a project approach that would allow having staff relocate only once. Further, a consensus emerged favoring a single campus with two separate buildings, one for the public safety facility and one for the Town Administration.

The Town Council discussed the need to select a construction manager in order to advance the project. The discussion included consideration of the merits of Skillman Group, which performed construction management for the recently completed Lincoln Community Center. A councilor expressed reservations regarding that firm. It was determined to schedule a meeting with representatives from Skillman to discuss the concerns of the Councilor, at the Study Session of March 18.

6. Councilor Kuiper presented a request that the Police Department proceed with the hire of a 38th police officer. It was noted that in recent years owing to resources constraints, the department had been operating with force strength of 37. It was noted that while a 38th hire could be funded until the end of the current year, it was not clear the position could be funded in 2014. The discussion included the need to identify the necessary sustainable funding before any added hire should be authorized.

Noting that the current information technician function is assigned to a full-time officer, who performs only computer work for the police department, it was discussed that perhaps at the current officer's retirement, the successor should be a civilian rather than another police officer.

7. The Town Council President reported that Martin Plisky of Schererville formerly of Highland had asked for an opportunity to meet with the Town Council to encourage Highland returning as a participating and sponsoring community for the Safety Village. The Town Council sought feedback on whether a meeting was necessary. Some concerns were expressed regarding the financial commitment that may be sought.
8. The Town Council discussed the condition of Kleinman Road between Ridge Road and Wirth Road. It was noted that the section of road was in poor condition and would require reconstruction rather than mere repaving.

The discussion included concerns about what were described as “gouges” that were in the roads at several parts of town. The concerns included what the possible source of the gouges and the ways and means to repair them.

9. The Town Council discussed the merits of locating the public works director’s office from the town hall to public works facility. The discussion included work force issues and the importance of supporting the transition and development of the recently appointed Assistant Public Works Director.
10. The Town Council discussed a recent meeting that was conducted with the Redevelopment Director and the new owners of the former Finke’s site. The owners discussed the proposed development the owner desired to construct. The discussion further included that the owner represented that based upon the rents that the market would likely permit at that location, the desired (needed) return on investment was not rendered. Consequently, there may be a need for the Town to provide an economic development or redevelopment incentive to ameliorate the economic barrier and thereby advance the construction of the proposed development.
11. The Town Council discussed the request of the Fire Chief to increase the paid on call hourly rate for firefighters by 25¢ per hour raising the current hourly pay from \$12.25 to \$12.50. The Town Council needed further information regarding the wage implementation plan from the Fire Chief before moving forward. It was reported that the Fire Chief opined that he could support the increase in his present budget.

There being no further business to be discussed by the Town Council, the regular study session of the Town Council of **Monday, March 4, 2013**, was adjourned at 9:40 o’clock p.m.

Michael W. Griffin, IAMC/MMC/CPFA/CPFIM
Clerk-Treasurer